

# National Preparedness Month 2005

(September 2, 1:15 p.m.) Coalition forces have more than doubled in size to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross for National Preparedness Month 2005. Hundreds of activities are planned and millions of Americans will be reached during this month-long emergency preparedness initiative.

More than 190 national organizations and all 56 states and territories have joined the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing for emergencies and to encourage individuals to take action this September as part of National Preparedness Month 2005. The National Preparedness Month Coalition will distribute emergency preparedness information, host events and sponsor activities across the country to encourage individuals to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools.

"The devastation and tragic loss of life caused by Hurricane Katrina earlier this week reinforce the urgency of our coalition's work," said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. "We urge all Americans to take some simple steps to prepare for emergencies including getting an emergency supply kit, making a family emergency plan and learning more about how to respond to emergencies that could affect your area."

National Preparedness Month will offer Americans a variety of opportunities to learn more about preparing for emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist threats. Events, activities, and messages will encourage individuals to get an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, be informed about different threats and get involved in preparing their communities.

"For almost 125 years, preparedness has been a natural part of the lifesaving mission of the Red Cross. In the terrible aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, there could be no more important message than the need for Americans to get prepared for the next disaster. We are honored to join the Department of Homeland Security in this critical mission," said Bonnie McElveen-Hunter, Chairman of the American Red Cross.

This is the second annual National Preparedness Month. During the first National Preparedness Month, held in September 2004, a Coalition of more than 80 organizations and all 56 states and territories held hundreds of events and activities across the nation.

State and territory activities during the 2005 effort will range from distributing preparedness information at state fairs to issuing proclamations and holding town hall meetings on emergency preparedness. The more than 190 national coalition members will help reach millions of Americans via hundreds of events scheduled to take place throughout September. In addition to hosting events, organizations will share preparedness information with their members, customers, employees and communities through websites, newsletters and public service announcements.

The following is a sample of the National Preparedness Month activities taking place throughout September:

\* The U.S. Department of Homeland Security will support National Preparedness Month through the Ready campaign and Citizen Corps. Citizen Corps, the Department's grassroots effort, will work with its more than 1,770 state and local councils and partners to promote community-based preparedness, outreach and training opportunities. In addition, in late September, Homeland Security will build on its successful Ready campaign, which encourages Americans to prepare for emergencies by launching Ready Kids, a tool to help parents and teachers educate children ages 8-12 about emergencies and how they can help get their family prepared.

\* The more than 900 American Red Cross field units will take preparedness messages to the local level with a variety of

events and activities aimed at encouraging families to make and discuss their emergency communications plans. Public and private entities will come together and host blood drives. Outreach will be conducted where Americans live, learn and work including a mass dissemination on September 22 of communications plan templates and Red Cross safety tubes to commuters at major transit stations during evening rush hour in multiple states in the Northeast.

\* The New York City Office of Emergency Management will host a preparedness awareness day at Grand Central Station in midtown Manhattan on September 1. At the event, various city and community partners will distribute copies of a new pocket-sized Ready New York preparedness guide to commuters, and educate citizens about the ways they can prepare for emergencies.

\* The Boeing Company will provide preparedness information to its approximately 151,000 employees by posting articles on emergency preparedness topics including personal preparedness, pet preparedness and business preparedness on its intranet throughout September. The company will also be distributing information through a variety of avenues including company sponsored safety fairs.

\* The State of Tennessee is undertaking a series of statewide initiatives including the Governor proclaiming September as Preparedness Month; releasing public service advertisements encouraging Tennesseans to prepare for emergencies; placing a preparedness message on the payroll slips of the State's 47,000 employees; and conducting Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training courses that will create approximately 25 new CERT programs statewide.

\* The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) has recently developed a brochure on national preparedness, which was distributed at the organization's 106th National Convention, August 20 - 25, 2005 in Salt Lake City, UT. In addition, the VFW will mail copies of the new brochure to more than 9,000 VFW Posts worldwide and will highlight National Preparedness Month in its newsletters, bulletins and other publications, collectively reaching more than 2.4 million VFW members throughout September.

\* In September, the National Organization on Disability's Emergency Preparedness Initiative will introduce a national outreach and awareness campaign, "Partners in Preparedness." This campaign includes the distribution of a multiple informational pamphlets, including a newly announced four-part pamphlet series for disability-specific preparedness, and an instructional poster showcasing the integration of people with disabilities into emergency preparedness.

\* The National Latino Peace Officers Association will distribute materials, including Homeland Security's Listo brochures, to communities throughout the country at events, including Mexican Independence Day festivals, which draw more than 100,000 attendees annually, in Los Angeles and Houston on September 17.

National Preparedness Month 2005 will officially launch with a daylong public emergency preparedness fair on September 1, 2005 at Union Station in Washington, D.C. The event will kick off with Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff and American Red Cross Chairman Bonnie McElveen-Hunter offering remarks on the importance of emergency preparedness. During the event, individuals will receive preparedness materials and learn about training opportunities from a number of National Preparedness Month Coalition organizations. Live on-stage demonstrations will take place throughout the day, including first aid and CPR, creating an emergency supply kit, and making a family communication plan.

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National Preparedness Month 2005 is a nationwide effort co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools. Any event or activity conducted during National Preparedness Month is purely voluntary, and Homeland Security is not financially obligated to any National Preparedness Month Coalition Member. For more information, visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) and click on the National Preparedness Month banner.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, a Cabinet-level federal agency, promotes public emergency preparedness through the Ready campaign and Citizen Corps. Ready is a national public service advertising campaign produced by the Advertising Council in partnership with Homeland Security that is designed to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to potential terrorist attacks and other emergencies. Citizen Corps, Homeland Security's grassroots effort, localizes Ready's preparedness messages and provides local opportunities for citizens to get emergency response training; participate in community exercises; and volunteer to support local emergency responders.

Governed by volunteers and supported by community donations, the American Red Cross is a nationwide network of nearly 900 locally supported chapters dedicated to saving lives and helping people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. Led by one million volunteers and 35,000 employees, the Red Cross annually mobilizes relief to families affected by some 70,000 disasters, trains more than 15 million people in lifesaving skills and keeps U.S. military families connected worldwide. The Red Cross is the largest supplier of blood and blood products to more than 3,000 hospitals across the nation and also assists victims of international disasters and conflicts at locations worldwide. The American Red Cross is not a government agency.